

**Idaho State Bowhunters - Idaho Traditional Bowhunters - Treasure Valley Bowhunters
Rock Creek Archers - Magic Valley Bowmen - Black Canyon Bowmen
Low Mountain Archery - Dead On Archery - Glenn's Ferry Frontsite Shooters**

January 27, 2022

Dear Legislators:

Our organizations and businesses write to you today to express our **opposition to Representative Mitchell's HB 507**, which would legalize the use of electronic lights on arrows and mechanically expandable broadheads for arrows.

Archery hunting is a very popular and treasured tradition and continues into modern day as a traditional activity, largely because it has remained a traditional pursuit free of technological advancements. This means the ways in which we seek animals and shoot them, and the process of recovering them has remained relatively the same for many years with few technological advancements. People begin archery hunting to utilize woodsman skills and to purposefully challenge themselves to rely on the same skills our fathers used to successfully harvest game, like their fathers before them, and so on.

Idaho is unlike other states who have welcomed technology, like lighted nocks and mechanical broadheads, into archery hunting. We pride ourselves on this fact. Not only do Idaho bowhunters largely support keeping the sport as traditional as possible, but this opposition to "technology creep" has successfully kept Idaho abundant with hunting opportunity for all. States that allow more technology significantly increase harvest rates, lowering animal numbers and therefore lowering tags allocated for the following season. Residents in states welcoming technology to hunting, like Utah, may only get to hunt one of every three years. Even if one may be likely to be more successful because of the tech, in Idaho we prefer the opportunity to hunt every year. It's an annual tradition to spend time afield with family and friends. We will lose the frequency of this experience if we succumb to technology creep as other states have.

Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, we believe these kinds of decisions should be made between sportsmen and the IDFG Commission, who has the authority to allow such actions given to them by the 1938 Initiative. We believe the minutiae of hunting regulations is best left to discussions among sportsmen and sportsman groups, who are closer to the Commission and find it easier and more accessible than working within the legislative process. The Commission meets around the state, year-round, as opposed to once a year in Boise. Further, the topic of lighted nocks, mechanical broadheads, and other means of technological advancement routinely come in front of the Commission. Lighted nocks were brought before the Commission only two years ago and public sentiment strongly favored keeping them out of hunting for now. This sentiment may change some time soon and if so, the Commission's process of public involvement through petitioning and negotiated rulemaking will be the arena best suited for enactment.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



Idaho Sportsmen Comments on HB 507

House bill 507, introduced in the 2022 Idaho Legislative Session, was a direct result of a long-standing issue among bowhunters and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

While the Commission members have changed over the years, based on gubernatorial appointments, the issues surrounding archery equipment have lingered. Repeated requests for the Commission to change their stance on the use of lighted knocks and expandable broadheads have failed. Despite requests from members of the Idaho House of Representatives to the Commission to take up the issues, including recently, the Commission has not adjusted their position.

Idaho has yet to adopt the use of this equipment, resulting in Idaho being the last state in the union that prohibits the use of lighted nocks and expandable broadheads. While we would certainly prefer to have had the Commission take up the issue, which would allow all interested parties to negotiate, and create the ability to negotiate, some form of regulated use of this equipment, that hasn't happened for many years. As a result of this continued conflict, Rep. Brandon Mitchell (R-5) introduced HB 507.

The merits of the bill allow Idahoans to choose to use lighted knocks and expandable broadheads while archery hunting. There is no obligation to use this equipment, and other equipment previously allowed remains legal. Broad support by many sportsmen to allow use of the equipment, combined with the reality of Idaho being the only state that prohibited its use were incongruent and didn't make sense to us. Additionally, we trust hunters to make decisions for themselves on what equipment suits their abilities and preferences.

For many years, the sporting community has held sacred the enactment by ballot initiative, of the Fish and Game Commission and their role in managing wildlife. The wisdom of this model is evident in the vast access and many opportunities throughout Idaho's diverse regions. This is something that, like many other groups, Idaho Sportsmen supports and has worked to protect. We fully understand and appreciate where other interested groups were coming from with their opposition to this bill. But even those who opposed the bill based on this being a commission only decision, mentioned many of their members supported the actual policy in question and/or the allowance of this equipment.

Like it or not, the Idaho legislature has clear policy making authority over title 36, where the Fish and Game laws reside. These laws are regularly changed to meet the needs of Idaho throughout the generations. In most years, Idaho Fish and Game presents agency supported legislation to modify the sections of code that need updated. Similarly, many laws have been brought before the Natural Resource Committees in the House and Senate to improve, change, delete or even revamp laws that the Commission, and sportsmen abide by. This process is not new or unprecedented.

When it comes to wildlife management, and the role of the Commission versus the Idaho legislature, it has long been the position of sportsmen of all kinds that the commission should be fully responsible, and we respectfully ask the legislature to stay out of biological or social decision making that will impact future access and opportunities for Idaho Sportsmen. This can seem to many, to be a fine line but we are confident in the Department, the Commission and the Idaho legislature and their ability to abide by this clearly drawn line going forward.

Since its founding in 2020, Idaho Sportsmen has worked diligently to provide a voice for Idahoans who legally and ethically hunt, fish, trap and recreationally shoot.



Idaho Sportsmen carefully tracks and monitors all rules, policies, appointments, and appropriations that have a nexus to related issues for sportsmen as well as agency's board and commission decisions. From the Anderson Dam recharge project to wolf depredation control actions and everything in between, we strive to be a voice for the many sportsmen in Idaho who love to recreate in our great state. We communicate regularly with agency staff and leadership, legislators, and their support staff, the Idaho Governor's Office, and many others to ensure we are in the know. Our board and committees are comprised entirely of volunteers. Many of whom have decades of personal and professional experience in natural resource policy and contribute their time, talents, and treasure, to advancing access and opportunity for all sportsmen in Idaho.

We wish to express thanks to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Commission for their dedication, commitment, and willingness to serve the sportsmen, women, and youth of Idaho. While we may have differed on this issue, we hope to continue the relationship of trust we have built and worked to maintain. We also want to thank the Idaho legislature. The policy making process can be emotional, complex, and nuanced. It is far easier, especially in the current political climate, to not serve in elected office, so again thank you for your service to the state of Idaho. We strive to continue our professional and courteous relationships with all of you as elected officials and to ensure we can properly inform you of issues and our positions on them, but we fully understand your responsibility is to your constituents.

Thank you all for your continued support and helping us ensure we have and keep quality access and opportunity, to Idaho's world class outdoor hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting. While some may disagree on the specifics of this bill or its process, we cannot lose sight of what we have here in Idaho and what other states are facing. When sportsmen are united and working together, we can prevent many of the issues seen in states where policymakers and groups are seeking to remove or limit access and opportunity. We simply cannot lose sight of the bigger picture.

Below is a transcript of the testimony on HB 507 of Executive Director Benn Brocksome representing Idaho Sportsmen. A link to the meeting agenda and recording can be found HERE.

Good afternoon, Chairmen, members of the committee, Benn Brocksome on behalf of Idaho Sportsmen.

We do stand in support of the legislation, with a caveat, and as you work out the bugs on your process to sign up to testify it might be worth putting an asterisk for nuance. That nuance is that, as you've heard, the ability for season settings and methods of take to be managed by the [IDFG] Commission is sacred to sportsman in Idaho, and we respect that process and hope you would too. It is also a call to the Commission to be a little more pragmatic in dealing with some of these issues so that the folks who are working on them don't circumvent process and go to one of you all as their elected official to solve a problem that we are trying to work on, so maybe just an awareness on both sides.

But as to the bill itself and the use of this equipment, as was mentioned, it is already being used in every other state. There is a lot of data in those states, and we will accrue our own data and watch this carefully over the next couple of years... but as it stands right now, the policy itself, we would support.



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

600 S Walnut / P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707

Brad Little / Governor
Ed Schriever / Director

February 23, 2022

To: Senate Resources and Environment Committee
Testimony: House Bill 507, pertaining to archery equipment

My name is Jon Rachael and I am the Wildlife Bureau Chief for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 507 on behalf of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

Regulating hunting methods involves both biological and social considerations. The Department and Commission manage hunting opportunities to meet a wide range of hunter preferences, while ensuring harvest is sustainable and populations remain healthy. Primitive weapon hunts, specifically archery and muzzleloader only seasons, are valued and important opportunities for the hunting public. Because primitive weapons have shorter ranges and are ultimately less effective, hunters can enjoy long seasons and/or opportunities when animals may be more vulnerable.

Technological advancements, including battery powered nocks and mechanical broadheads present a management challenge. As primitive weapons become less primitive, hunter success rates increase. At some point, high success rates compromise the ability to meet the objectives of long seasons and/or opportunities and sustainable harvest. The Commission continually endeavors to strike the right balance between allowing increasingly effective equipment and liberal hunting opportunities, while maintaining sustainable harvest and healthy populations.

To inform that balance, the Commission regularly reviews advances in technology and their implications. Over the past 15 years, this has involved a thorough assessment of archery and muzzleloader equipment, a workshop on the history of method-of-take restrictions, and a technology workshop at a shooting range. As a result, the Commission has adopted rule changes after considering hunter preferences relative to advances in technology. It was this history of deliberations balancing technology with hunter preferences for opportunities that led the Commission to deny a petition to allow the use of lighted nocks in 2020. Importantly, the question of mechanical broadheads has never come before the Commission as a petition for a rule change.

This legislation has generated a great deal of interest and discussion from hunters, both in favor of and opposed to mechanical broadheads and lighted nocks. As a result of receiving constituent input, the Commission believes administrative rulemaking involving hunters interested and familiar with these complex and nuanced topics provides a better forum to navigate this issue than a legislated outcome. For this reason, the Commission has adopted the position to not support House Bill 507, and directed the Department to undertake negotiated rulemaking in the event this legislation does not pass. This would provide an important opportunity for public engagement on the use of this equipment and the balance between technology and opportunity.

This concludes my testimony and I am happy to stand for questions.

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
IDAHO

Chairman Steve Vick
Chair, Senate Resources & Environment Committee
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0038

Chairman Vick:

The Idaho Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers respectfully opposes House Bill No. 507, which would permit the use of lighted nocks and mechanical broadheads as part of regulated archery hunting, and requests that the Senate Resources & Environment Committee reject this bill.

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) is the voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife. We seek to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting through education and work on behalf of fish, wildlife and wild places. With chapters in 48 states, Washington D.C., two Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory, as well as nearly 2,000 dues paying members in Idaho, BHA attracts sportsmen and women, as well as other public land users, from across the continent.

While Idaho BHA has no formal opinion on the use of lighted nocks or mechanical broadheads in general, and many of our members may utilize both tools in other states where they are legal, we remain steadfast in our support of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to set such regulations. BHA does not endorse advancing wildlife management policies and decisions by state or federal legislation or voter referendums and ballot initiatives.

A large percentage of our membership here in Idaho counts themselves as proud bowhunters, and we fully understand and appreciate the goals of this bill. Our opposition is purely one of process. Determining methods of take for wildlife, both in specific and in general, is a highly complicated process that has been and should continue to be discussed by the Commission. To that end, we request that the Senate Resources & Environment Committee defer adjudication of this matter to the Fish and Game Commission and reject H0507. Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Idaho Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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IDAHO@BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG

Shelly Johnson

From: Representative Brandon Mitchell
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 4:55 PM
To: Shelly Johnson
Subject: Re: Senate Resources & Environment Committee on 02/23/2022 at 1:30 P.M.

Thank you,

Dan Schoenberg from Moscow wanted to testify, but his wife has surgery. Here is his written testimony.

I have been a resident of the great State of Idaho since the age of four, I began archery hunting in 1978 at the age of 19 and enjoy the majestic outdoors and opportunity to hunt, fish and just be surrounded by nature. I am in support of archery hunters being able to use lighted knocks and mechanical broadheads if they so desire. I support the concept that each hunter, within reason, can choose the "tools" (compound vs recurve; types of sights, broadheads, knocks etc) they would like to they deploy when hunting.

Being a hunter comes with great responsibility and as an archery hunter I believe I have a greater responsibility to prepare before the hunt. It is not a sport where one can pick up your bow on opening day and expect to find success. It take hours of practice and preparation. The use of mechanical broadheads can help in that perpetration and in harvesting of game. The flight of an arrow changes between fixed broadheads and field or practice points. The mechanical broadhead and a practice head simulating a mechanical broadhead can be calibrated to have the same flight characteristics. This has the potential to equate a higher accuracy of shots, less wounded game because of the flight differences. It gives the archer an opportunity to a be more consistent on every shot in the field while hunting.

During the house hearings, a representative from, I believe the Idaho Fish and Game stated that the use of lighted knocks and mechanical broadheads may cause a higher kill rate and thus reduce the hunting days or force more quotas. I cannot even begin to guess how many animals have been hit and never recovered, and that is a shame. As an archer, that position does not make sense. As a responsible hunter I want to have a clean, humane kill, and not lose game. The use of the technology would help with this. With position of F&G, if game becomes even more scarce the decision might be made to no longer allow scopes on rifles so that it can reduce the number of animals taken during a season. I believe that the application of the type of technology in this bill will help sportsman to be better hunters if they choose to use it, the proposed legislation does not require archery hunters to use the technology if they do not wish to.

You have probably calculated that I have hunted in the State of Idaho for close to 50 years and have been an archery for well over 40 years. During this time there have been many advances in archery technology. Bows have gotten smaller and lighter, arrows have gone from aluminum to graphite. The speed that an arrow travels has increased with each advancement. Lighted knocks have been available for years now, and the State of Idaho is one of the last states in the nation that do not allow the use of lighted knocks for hunting. The last thing a hunter wishes to do is hit an animal and not be able to track and recover it. Lighted knocks would allow an archer to improve their ability to visually follow the path of an arrow once it is released. With the increased speed of arrows today, lighted knocks are a needed tool, gives the hunter an opportunity to be a more responsible hunter and outdoorsmen. With lighted knocks and archer has a better chance to see where an arrow struck and animal and a greater ability to recover and arrow in the field.

As an avid archer for well over 40 years I support this legislation to allow the use of mechanical broadheads and lighted knocks.

Thank you for your time and listening to hunters in Idaho.

Dan Schoenberg
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Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 22, 2022, at 3:59 PM, sres@senate.idaho.gov wrote:

Dear Rep. Mitchell,

You are scheduled to present ***In Person*** to the **Senate Resources & Environment Committee** on the following subject(s):

H 507 FISH AND GAME - Adds to existing law to authorize the use of certain archery equipment.

If you have written testimony, please provide a copy to the **Resources & Environment Committee** secretary.

If you have questions, please contact the **Resources & Environment Committee** secretary.

The Committee will meet at **1:30 P.M. on 02/23/2022** in **Room WW55**.

Shelly Johnson

From: Lena Amoah
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 8:58 AM
To: Shelly Johnson
Subject: FW: HB 507

-----Original Message-----

From: Jim Rehmeyer <jsrehmeyer@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2022 11:34 AM
To: Lena Amoah <shel@senate.idaho.gov>
Subject: HB 507

Hello,

I am emailing to get my voice heard for not supporting HB 507. This bill would not be good for idaho wildlife or Idaho sportsman. Please do not support this.

Thank you

James Rehmeyer, avid outdoorsman enthusiast and Idaho resident

Sent from my iPad

Shelly Johnson

From: Jim Rehmeyer <jsrehmeyer@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2022 11:32 AM
To: Shelly Johnson
Subject: HB 507

Hello,

I am emailing to get my voice heard for not supporting HB 507. This bill would not be good for idaho wildlife or Idaho sportsman. Please do not support this.

Thank you

James Rehmeyer, avid outdoorsman enthusiast and Idaho resident

Sent from my iPad